Technology Planning for USF E-rate

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You've got to be very careful if you don't know where you're going, because you might not get there
(Yogi Berra)

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Only Required for Priority 2 Funding

- Having an approved technology plan is now only required for libraries requesting priority 2 funding, that is, funding for internal connections.

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Technology planning will help you!

Creating a technology plan provides a time and place for you to think about your technology goals to help avoid IT crisis saving you time, expense and trouble.

Technology planning is profitable for all libraries, regardless of whether or not they apply for E-rate.

What Should I Know About Technology Planning for E-rate?

Each part of your plan must align with all of the others – your mission statement must be reflected in your goals which must be reflected in your budget. Technology plans are not considered independently from other areas of library operations.

But We're Not Rich…

- Technology planning should be appropriate to the organization for which it is a supporting document and a realistic appraisal of what your library can do within the confines of your expected budget.

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A Three Year Plan

- Technology plans may span up to 3 years
- E-rate years begin July 1 and end June 30

When to Write Your Plan

- A technology plan for the E-rate program must be <u>created</u> before you file your Form 470 in the fall and you must retain records that demonstrate this.

- It must be approved by the time services begin on July 1.

E-rate Five Elements for Technology Plan Approval

1. <u>Goals</u> and a <u>realistic strategy</u> for using telecommunications and information technology to improve library services

2. A <u>professional development</u> strategy to ensure that staff knows how to use the new technologies to improve education or library services

3. An <u>assessment</u> of existing telecommunication services, hardware, software, etc., and what is needed

Five Elements, cont.

4. A <u>sufficient budget</u> to acquire and maintain the hardware, software, professional development, and other services that will be needed to implement the strategy for improved library services

5. An <u>evaluation process</u> that enables the library to monitor progress toward the specified goals and make mid-course corrections in response to new developments and opportunities as they arise

Goals and a realistic strategy for using telecommunications and information technology to improve library services

Goals are Made Up of SMART Objectives

- **S**pecific. Objectives should generate specific actions and be detailed enough to be understandable and give clear directions to others.

- **M**easurable. A method for measuring an objective must be in place before work can begin. As such, a measure will determine when the objective has been accomplished.

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SMART Objectives cont.

- **A**ggressive but attainable. Objectives should be consistent with available resources but still cause library staff members to stretch to meet them.

- **R**esults-oriented. Rather than being general or vague, objectives should specify a result – an output or an outcome.

- **T**ime-bound. A specific deadline should be stated for achieving the objective. Generally the shorter the time frame for action, the better.

Example Goals

- Services – Goal A: Investigate wireless Internet access for public use. Activities:
  - Evaluate the capability of using wireless technology while keeping library network secure
  - Have IT evaluate each building for "dead zones"
  - Design wireless area for each of the branches
  - Evaluate space for patrons
  - Write policy and procedure

What to Avoid

- Goals you have already met, such as equipment that was purchased before the time span of the technology plan

- Strategies or technology goals that are not aligned with your library's mission statement

    (example: mission statement is clear that children's and adult services are equally important, but only the adult services area is addressed in plan.)

- Goals that do not specifically relate to library services.

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It's OK to Include…

- Services that are on-going such as "continuing to provide public access to the Internet"
- Goals for staff such as "train staff with new forms of technology" (in fact, staff training is a required part of an E-rate tech plan!)

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Please Keep in Mind

You cannot receive discounts on services not included in your technology plan. If you will apply for a discount on your Internet costs, you must include providing Internet service as a goal.

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USF Element 2: Professional Development

Professional development strategy to ensure that staff knows how to use the new technologies to improve education or library services.

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It's OK to Include...

- Training that you do on-site such as training provided during staff in-service days
- Training provided by your ILS
- Online classes
- Classes that staff take at other libraries
- Classes provided by the co-op
- Conference attendance where material is appropriate, such as MLA or the Rural Libraries Conference
- Classes or seminars that staff can receive CEUs for, such as MeL training
- The library's training procedures for new staff

An assessment of telecommunication services, hardware, software, and other services needed

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First: What Do You Have?

- Conduct a technology inventory of hardware and software

- Free tools available from TechAtlas (for working online) and TechSoup (for Word documents you can print and fill in)

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Example

Accessible	OS	Internet	Total Units
Patron Access Workstation	Windows XP	Yes	24
Patron Access Catalog	Windows XP	Yes	26
Patron Access Laptop	Windows XP	Yes	11
Staff Access Workstation	Windows XP	Yes	10
Children's Workstation	Windows XP	No	5

Second: What Do You Need?

- Evaluate hardware, software and other technology services you will need to improve library services

USF Element 4: Budget

- The plan must provide for a sufficient budget to acquire and maintain the hardware, software, professional development, and other services that will be needed to implement the strategy for improved education or library services.

Guidelines to Keep in Mind

- Build in 10% of your budget for contingencies
- Best-practices establishes a 3-5 year replacement plan for staff computers and for public access computers.

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Budget Line Items
for Next 3 Years

- Hardware

- Software

- Telecommunications

- Contract Services for IT staff

- Staff Training

- Other (Please describe)

What to Avoid

- Establishing the goal of purchasing services or equipment (such as hardware or software) without a line item in your budget to pay for it.

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The plan must include an evaluation process that enables the school or library to monitor progress toward the specified goals and make mid-course corrections in response to new developments and opportunities as they arise.

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- Benchmarks toward your goals must be <u>measurable</u> and <u>time-sensitive</u>
  - **Example**: Replace all public access computers more than four years old by December 31, 2013 (Goal 1A).
  - **Example**: Redesign Web site so that it meets accessibility standards by August 31, 2013 (Goal 6B).
- Regular Review
  - Reviewing your plan on a regular basis will help you measure the success of your technology plan and help you make course corrections.

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What to Avoid

- Leaving out a full response to this area.
  - You must have an evaluation process in place and acknowledge that you are prepared to make mid-course corrections as appropriate.

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Also, let us know...

Inform the Library of Michigan in writing of any substantive changes over the course of the 3-year technology plan. Keep a copy of this letter with your E-rate documentation.

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What To Do Once Your Technology Plan is Done

- Email your technology plan to be approved by the Library of Michigan.

- Use the SLD's 5 guidelines as a checklist – that is what we use to approve your plan or return it for further work.

- Once approved, we send you an approval letter which you should keep on file for at least 5 years after the last date of service – approximately 8-9 years after the plan is written.

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After It's Approved

- Technology plans are audited by E-rate as a matter of routine to meet federal guidelines to reduce waste, fraud and abuse. Write your plan with this possibility in mind.